

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY TEHRAN IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 067351

CHARGE FROM NAAS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IR, AF

SUBJECT: FORTHCOMING AUDIENCE WITH SHAH: AFRICA

REF: TEHRAN 2494

1. WE WILL BE REPEATING TO YOU A NUMBER OF TELEGRAMS
WHICH WILL PROVIDE YOU USEFUL BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON
AFRICA. MATERIAL IN PARAS 3 AND 4 IS DRAWN FROM VERY
RECENTLY PREPARED BACKGROUND PAPER:

2. WE HAVE NOTHING TO ADD TO REPLY YOU GAVE KHALATBARY
(TEHRAN 2491).

3. SOVIET ACTIVITIES IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA INCLUDE:

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(A) MILITARY ASSISTANCE AGREEMENTS WITH 18 COUNTRIES;
(B) ARMS TRANSFERS TO AFRICAN GOVERNMENTS ON THE ORDER OF
DOLS 775 MILLION (WITH MORE THAN DOLS 475 MILLION ACTUALLY
DELIVERED); (C) APPROXIMATELY 3,000 MILITARY ADVISERS
ASSIGNED TO AID IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL MILITARY
FORCES; AND (D) MILITARY FACILITIES IN SOMALIA AND
GUINEA.

THE SOVIET UNION IS A MAJOR MILITARY SUPPLIER TO GUERRILLA MOVEMENTS IN RHODESIA AND NAMIBIA THROUGH THE

FRONT LINE" AFRICAN STATES, AND HAS ESTABLISHED CLOSE POLITICAL AND MILITARY SUPPLY RELATIONSHIPS WITH ANGOLA AND MOZAMBIQUE. ALTHOUGH THE SOVIETS HAVE BECOME MAR- GINALLY LESS STRIDENT IN THEIR PUBLIC DENUNCIATIONS OF WESTERN ATTEMPTS TO NEGOTIATE A RHODESIAN SETTLEMENT, THEY HAVE REMAINED GENERALLY UNHELPFUL. THE SOVIETS EVIDENTLY BELIEVE THAT THE STALEMATED MEDIATION EFFORTS PROVIDE THEM WITH AN OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN THEIR TIES WITH THE MORE MILITANT GUERRILLA ELEMENTS, ENHANCE BLACK RECEPTIVITY TO SOVIET POLITICAL AND MILITARY SUPPORT GENERALLY, AND OFFSET THEIR RELATIVE WEAKNESS AS A PROVIDER OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE. SOVIET CHAIRMAN PODGORNYY WILL PRESUMABLY PUR- SUE THESE OBJECTIVES DURING HIS VISIT TO SOUTHERN AND EASTERN AFRICA IN LATE MARCH.

3. THE HORN: WHILE A TOKEN SOVIET ARMS DELIVERY TO ETHIOPIA HAS ALREADY TAKEN PLACE, ETHIOPIA IS STILL LARGELY U.S.-SUPPLIED. COLONEL MENGISTU HAS, HOWEVER, FOR SOME TIME FAVORED MOVING CLOSER TO MOSCOW; HE BELIEVES THAT THE U.S. IS THE ENEMY OF THE ETHIOPIAN REVOLUTION. IN THE ABSENCE OF WESTERN SUPPORT AND INFLUENCE, ETHIOPIA BELIEVES MOSCOW IS ITS MAIN HOPE OF RESTRAINING SOMALIA. GIVEN SOVIET CONCERN FOR THE SECURITY OF THEIR FACILITIES AT BERBERA IN SOMALIA AND THEIR GROWING PROSPECTS IN ETHIOPIA, THEY HAVE EVERY REASON TO SHARE OUR DESIRE FOR AVOIDANCE
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OF CONFLICT BETWEEN THE TWO. THE MOST LIKELY SPARK FOR SUCH A CONFLICT IS DJIBOUTI. WE PROMISED THE FRENCH THAT WE WOULD USE WHAT INFLUENCE WE HAVE WITH THE ETHIOPIANS AND SOMALIS TO URGE RESTRAINT. SUCH URGINGS NOW BY THE SOVIETS WOULD CARRY GREATER WEIGHT IN BOTH ADDIS AND MOGADISCIO.

THE SOVIETS LAST DECEMBER INITIATED AN ARMS SUPPLY ARRANGE- MENT WITH THE LEFTIST ETHIOPIAN PROVISIONAL MILITARY GOVERNMENT. THEY APPARENTLY CONCLUDED THAT THE POSSIBLE RISKS TO THEIR POSITION IN SOMALIA WERE MANAGEABLE AND WERE, IN ANY CASE, OUTWEIGHED BY THE ADVANTAGES OF OBTAIN- ING A PREDOMINANT POSITION IN ETHIOPIA, THE SECOND MOST POPULOUS COUNTRY IN AFRICA. THE SOMALIS ARE REPORTEDLY UNHAPPY ABOUT THIS MOVE, BUT OWING TO THE PERVASIVE SOVIET PRESENCE IN THEIR COUNTRY HAVE SO FAR BEEN UNABLE OR UN- WILLING TO REDUCE THEIR DEPENDENCE ON MOSCOW. MODERATE STATES IN THE AREA, INCLUDING SAUDI ARABIA, SUDAN, AND KENYA, HAVE EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT GROWING SOVIET INFLU- ENCE IN ETHIOPIA.

4. SOVIET ROLE IN ZAIRE:

THE SITUATION: IN THE ZAIRIAN CRISIS THE SOVIETS INITIALLY
HELD THEIR FIRE. HOWEVER, OF LATE, THEY HAVE DISSEMINATED

TENDENTIOUS NEWS STORIES TO THE EFFECT THAT ANGOLA WAS NOT
INVOLVED IN THE SHABA INVASION. THEY HAVE REPLAYED WESTERN
ARTICLES HIGHLIGHTING U.S. MILITARY AID TO ZAIRE. THEY
HAVE NOT, HOWEVER, CHARGED ZAIRE WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR
PRECIPITATING THE SHABA ATTACK BY INCURSIONS INTO ANGOLA.

THE USSR PROBABLY SEES ZAIRE AS A TARGET FOR "REVOLUTIONARY"
OPPORTUNITY WHERE IT MAY BE ABLE TO ENHANCE INFLUENCE
SUBSTANTIALLY AT THE EXPENSE OF THE WESTERN POWERS.
WE DO NOT KNOW TO WHAT EXTENT THERE IS COORDINATION
BETWEEN THE SOVIET AND CUBAN DIPLOMATIC AND MILITARY
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MOVES, BUT WE PRESUME SOME EXISTS.
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